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London, W.C.1.
Telephone : Museum 2621.

And Raymond came to dinner, & wanted me to meet Mrs Craigie, & I said I didn't want to meet the upper class: I wanted to meet washerwomen, & shopkeepers. Of course, how was Raymond to know I had been spun round by Tolstoi? I seemed to him merely waspish & plaguey, making excuses, & sneering & laughing at his ladies. And what was at the back of it all was simply my not being able to get away off into my novel; my being hemmed down tight to my lecture.

I saw Shi at Hayes Common yesterday.

Do you by any chance remember Kent? After all, I did so part of my misery is not having you. Yes, I miss you, I miss you. I dare not speak, because you will say I am not work, & cannot feel the things dumb people feel. You know, that is rather rotten rot, my dear Vita. After all, what is a lovely phrase? One that has stopped up as much Truth as it can hold. But this analysing reminds me of my lecture, which I am infinitely sick of — To explain different kinds of novels to children — to make little anecdotes out of it — that took me more time & trouble than to write 6 Times leaders. But it was all right — 60 nice children: a large Georgian country house; immense cedars; angular open minded school mistress; a drive home in the dark with Nena & Duncan, who poured out pure Society & pleasure in life, not brilliantly or sparklingly, but freely, swiftly, luxuriously. And as we drove, I kept seeing the streets you drove me through; & thinking about you. & thinking how shy I had been of you; & then, when I rushed you, how you at once stepped out of that focus into another; & what distance shall we be at on Monday the 10th May?

Tuesday, Feb. 2nd Now I must end this. And I have it

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said anything very much, or given you any notion of the terrific high waves, & the infernal deep gulfs, in which I mount & toss in a few days. So does every one. Up & down we go, violently, incessantly; & I'm half ashamed, now I try to write it, to see what pigmy Egotisms are at the root of it, with me laughing that I can't write my novel, must go out to tea, should buy a hat. Oh but there's Vita too — that's not a pigmy Egotism — wanting her.

D'ju know — I had a real shock of disappointment this morning.[2] I was certain I had a letter from you — tore it open — found, instead, a letter from a woman who sat opposite me in a blue bus 10 years ago, & wants now to come & do a bust of my head — But the flattery of this made me so angry that I've been again cursing — no privacy, always people coming, & no letter from you. Why not? Only a scrap from Dover, & a wild melancholy adorable moan from Trieste.

No photograph either.

Goodbye, dearest shaggy creature.

V. W.

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Feb-3rd 1926

Telephone: 2621 Museum.

Here's a letter from Cairo, I mean from the Thos Cyprus, come this morning, a dumb & blind letter; but I'm getting good at reading them. I did like it. And I wrote to you yesterday to Baghdad, & see that I must write now to catch the mail, to Teheran; so there's no news. Also, you'll be so fed up, Hubby, & ask that. You'll have forgotten me, the room, the Crans. We eat a very poor show against Teheran. Gregory is in hospital with mange; & I'm alone — oh thank God — Morgan Forster is a wretched Frenchman, who talked without stopping, having this moment gone. How difficult it is to imagine any word of this reaching to you at Teheran! Have you got through safe & well? Are you happy? What do you see when you look over this paper? Rose pink hills, a little tufts of red flowers, I imagine.

I'm too dissipated to write. Morgan has been staying with old Hardy. The Film Company rings up & says Will you arrange for us

to film the great novelist at work.[2] For we hear he can't live long." Mrs Hardy came in to tell Morgan this, much distressed, for old Hardy hadn't been well.
Then the way, "who do you think moved with my husband's life?" In order to
feel the ground, Morgan says, "Well, Middleton Murry's a great admirer" —
whereupon Mrs Hardy flames out (to all our joy) "No, no, Mr Forster.
We moved not like that at all" — in spite of the devotion of that worm who
took his wife to be delivered of a son, to be called Thomas, in Dorchester,
but she was delivered, of a daughter, & so made away. Murry, by the way
has arraigned your poor Virginia, & Virginia's poor Tom Eliot, & all
their works, in the Adelphi. Condemned them to death.
On Friday (but this will have happened weeks ago) we go to
Redmell. Doesn't how nice to have you there, in a month or two. I made
£20 unexpectedly yesterday, & vowed to spend it perfecting the water closet on
your behalf. But Teheran is exciting me too much. I believe,
at this moment, more in Teheran than in Tavistock Square. I see Jan,

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somehow in long coat & trousers, like an Abyssinian Empress, stalking over those barren hills. But really what I want to know is how the journey went, the 4 days through the snow, the caravan. Shall you write & tell me? And the affechmati killer — when is that coming?

I am back again in the thick of my novel, & things are crowding into my head: millions of things I might put in — all sorts of inconsistencies, which I make up walking the streets, gazing into the gas fire. Then I struggle with them, from 10 to 1: then lie on the sofa, watch the sun behind the chimneys: & think more things: then set up a hash of poultry in the basement, & go up to tea — Morgan Forster. I've thirked 2 parties, & another Frenchman, & buying a hat, & going to tea with Hilda Trevelyan: terrific really can't continue all this with keeping my imaginary people going. Not that they are people: what one imagines, in a novel, is a world. Then,

when one has imagined thro' world, suddenly people come in — but I don't know why one does it, or why it should alleviate the misery of life, & yet not make one exactly happy; for the strain is too great. Oh, to have done it. & be free.

Wandering on to the basement, where Roger is always walking up & down talking it seems to me, I ran on to Bob Trevelyan, who started off about you — Dolly: how he had read a poem of yrs: thought you had a real literary gift; liked your Hop o' article: & then, of course, he dwindled off on to his own poetry, & how to finish 3 plays & 4 epics, he must retire to Italy. Here the door opens & Mr Waley reads poems by Camilla Doyle for Mrs Woolf to read. Mrs Woolf has 2 long novels to read; & should be at it now, instead of scribbling to Vita, who's much too busily & gaily occupied to attend, & looking divinely beautiful too (I say, what do you wear — the purple dogs hair dress?) so I walk end, being exacting by nature, & hating the sort of divided attention which is all I can get now. But I'm faithful, & loving: & have met no one a patch on you — no one so comforting to be with.

Remember me, is that the phrase? — to Harold.

V. W.

52 Tavistock Sqre

Feb. 17th 1926

You are a crafty boy to write an alphabet letter, & so think you have solved the problem of dumbness. Well, I shall write a news letter — Duncan Mary has a cold. Bullen Hall has been burnt down with the loss of much valuable plate. Sidney Waterlow has been removed, some say forcably, to Siam, where it is thought he will oppress the natives. What else has happened in the great world of politics & society? I have been considering the question of snobbery. Eddy very kindly gave me dinner at the Ivy. (Did you remember the Ivy?) Of course I said, drawing home, Now I'll pay the cab. Eddy said nonsense. I said You're a damned aristocrat, & I will pay the cab. Which I did, & gave him, not only my well known lecture upon Russells & Herberts but a new Chapter, added for his benefit, called, How to aristocrat Can write a book. So we shanelled over this for a bit, & next day, oddly enough, I had to defend him — against — someone who shall be nameless — against from the charge of being an arriviste. What motive can he have in coming to Bloomsbury &c? Well, I said, it shows his intelligence. But, they said, with that name &

appearance, he can't be intelligent. Damn you, I said
that's Runcells & Herbert the other way round all over
again. So it is. And what is worse - Mayfair
Snobbery, or Bloomsbury? I've been awfully
worried by Elderly relations. Three old gentlemen,
round about 60, have discovered that Vanessa is
living in sin with Duncan Grant, & that I have
written Mrs. Dalloway - which Equally living in sin
their method of showing their loathing is to come to call,
to ask Vanessa & the Ever tells a picture, me if I've
Leonard been in a ~~lunatic~~ lunatic asylum lately;
for then they intimate how they live in Berkeley Sqre
& the Athenaeum & dine with - I don't know whom. &
find why, philosophically speaking as Rotherhithe the
Russian used to say, do 20 years in time make
this gulf between us.[2]

Then there was Rodmell. Now that was a joy -
I can't tell you how lovely the wild meadows
looking wet, but new & then the sun coming out
& stroking the downs. D'you remember how they
turn from green to blue, like opals? I don't
think you ever walk. You are always charging
at the head of an army - but I walk, nosing along,
making up phrases, & I'm ashamed to say how
wrapped up I get in my novel. Really, I am a

little alarmed at being so absorbed - Why should one engross oneself thus for so many months? & it may well be a mirage - I read it over & think it is a mirage; but I can scarcely do any thing else. I got up on to the Downs though, where you went plunging in the motor, & then came down to tea, & sat over a wood fire, & read some poetry, & a manuscript, (thinking still of my own novel) then cooked an omelette, some good coffee; & wanted a little drop of wine, with you. (Have you been tipsy oftn? Do you know it was 4 weeks yesterday that you went?) Yes, I often think of you, instead of my novel; I want to take you over the Wahn meadows in the summer on foot. I have thought of many million things to tell you. Devil that you are, to vanish to Persia & leave me here! — dabbling in wet type, which makes my fingers frozen; & setting up the poems of Mr. Manning Sanders, which the more I let them, the less I like. And, dearest Vita, we are each having two walk-coats made, one paid for by Mr. Dalloway, the other by The Common Reader: both dedicated to you.

Then I lunched with Lytton at Keltners. First I was so dazzled by the gilt & the warmth that in my homeboy I felt ready to abase myself at the feet of all the women - all the waiters: & really trembled at the incredible splendour of life. Half way through lunch, Logan triumphed: I said This is dross: I had a great argument with Lytton — about our method of writing Edmund Gosse, about our friendship; & age & time & death & all the rest of it. I was forgetting

Queen Elizabeth – He is writing about her. He says that she wrote to an ambassador "Had I been crested & not cloven you would not have dared to write to me thus." "That style!" I cried. "It refers to the male & female parts" he said. Gosse told him this, adding that of course it could not be quoted. "You read some queer for lunching with Gosse" I said. But Lytton thinks me narrow minded about Gosse. I say I know a mean Skunk when I see one, or rather smell one, for its his writing I abominate. And Vita, answer me this: why are all professors of English literature ashamed of English literature? Walter Raleigh calls Shakespeare "Billy Shaxs" – Blake, "Bill" – a good poem "a bit of all right". This shocks me. I've been reading his letters NYPL was insufferably charming, & we fitted like gloves, & I was very happy, & we nosed about the book shops together, & remarked upon the marvellous extent of our non reading. "What haven't we read?" I said Lytton. "It's a question of life, my dear Lytton" I said, sinking into an arm chair. And so it all began over again.

What bosh letters are, to be sure! I don't think this gives you much idea of what I have done for the last fortnight. There are immense tracts unnamed. I daresay the dumb letters are best. Ethel Sandy has just been to tea. We have been rolling over the gas fire; the Crane Vile goes on lifting. The day I am very attractive & asks me to stay with her. (But that is to make you jealous —) But

I should like to be with you in the Hebrides at this moment.
I've arranged our French motoring so that we shall be back on by May 10th.
So please see to it that you land that day. A lovely dumb letter from you
Came on Saturday, written on board ship. Oh I detract by degrees a shade
dear from your letters. They might be longer: they might be more boring.
But I see you frown — life is too Exciting. And don't go tempting
fanatalising poor Weevil. Of course, of course, I want to see deserts —
Arabian — I wondered Leonard for an hour about taking a year off —
seeing the world. We will go to Burma, I said: to the South Seas:
we have only one life: we are growing old. And he has a passion
for the East: so perhaps we shall. I read a bit of your poem the other night —
it must be good, I think: one can break off crumbs & nick them. I wonder
What you'll come to, as a writer (So enjoying in love & being happy, as a
woman: I like that in you.) But as a writer? I wish you'd not say
'profile' on the first page; its not right there: outline — something English would
be better there. Like a rich cake, I can break crumbs off your poem. I
imagine it wants a little central transparency: some sudden intensity: I'm
not sure. Send me something you've written. What I mean by a
sudden intensity may be nonsense, a reflection — But what is the use of
reflecting? I've sat with my pen in the air here ten minutes, thinking about
your poem; but I cannot send it to Persia. Our thoughts are too transitory —
If you were in the arm chair opposite, you could just catch them before they fall.
Another break. Now its the next day. I'm so orderly am I? I wish for
could live in my brain for a week. It is washed with the most violent waves of
emotion. What about? I dont know. It begins on waking; & I never know which
shall I be happy? Shall I be miserable. I grant, I keep up some mechanical
activity with my hands, setting type; ordering dinner. But the Without this,
I should crowd carelessly. And you think it all fixed & settled. We
then know nobody? — only our own versions of them, which, as likely as not,
are Emanations from ourselves.

Again; interrupted. This letter is all breaks & starts. What was I saying?
I was sitting over the fire & dreaming.

We're in the midst of our worst week. It always happens — how are all the books coming out, & our staff collapsed. Last year seven tore: we abolished tore, took an elderly widow instead; & now it's measles. ~~He~~ One little girl has measles; the other probably mumps. May she go off? So we're left to deal with the bills, the parcels, the callers — a gentleman who has been in Armenia, wants to write a book, & discourses for an hour about Bishop Gore, Leonard thinking him to mean Ormsby Gore. Hence misunderstandings. Then there's our Viola — thrown from a taxi & bruised her rib, & must go to Brighton to recruit. Will we correct the proofs? And Lady Oxford has been at them, & scribbled over every margin, "darling Viola, don't use the word naturally" "pleon. I hate it. Don't call Rabbledash 'Rib'! All this is trash — ask Wm. Woolf — "what is the printer to make of it?" There must be a curse. So that held over. And our fortunes tremble. If the books don't sell, I warn you I shall apply for the place of black Bunny at Long Barn.

Lubbock: they say he has deserted Lady Sybil, & returns to his own mat wearing at Sevenoaks. What the truth?

Tomorrow I'm to meet Ottoline & Percy Thank God we get off to Redmile on Saturday; & with luck I shall stay an extra day.

Please, Decent, a nice long letter: anything you like. I don't laugh at you. It's you who laugh at weevils.

Did I tell you how Grizzle is in hospital? No; I concealed it lest you should be anxious: the mange: rainbow stripes have appeared. across her back. But they are sanguine on the whole. And Raymond left today. And I envied him. And I want a little spoiling. No:

I don't forget you — Yr V. W.

March 6th 1926 — 52 Tavistock Square

Yes, dearest Lowzer, it is all very well about Bloomsbury being a
Golden Circus, & me a weevil, & Persia being a Rose & you an
Emperor Moth — I shall agree: but you are missing the loveliest
Spring there has ever been in England. We were motored
all through Oxfordshire two days ago. Sometimes we got out &
looked at a like manor house under a hill. Then we got right
up up up & on top of the world: & there was an old farm house,
& a walled garden: flagged paths: turf: a woman walking reading a
book. Meanwhile, as I assure you, it was so incredibly lovely — the
woods, the hill sides, the trees, that though I was thinking of you all
the fine motoring bad, through the desert, I could not think it was
lovelier, or stranger. This Spring, I may tell you, is not ordinary: for
there is nothing out, no leaves: yet it is as hot as June, but much
more delicate & distinguished: & so empty that everything seems ~~so~~
august. Russell Sq: the plane trees: — I dont know how to
describe it: & no doubt my dear Lowzer is bored.

The people who took us were Leonard's brother & his wife. I promptly
fell in love, not with him or her, but with their stock broker,
with never having read a book (except Robert Hitchens) with ~~the~~
not having heard of Roger, or Clive, or Duncan, or Lytton. Oh this is life, I
kept saying to myself: & what is Bloomsbury, & Lang Barn Esther, but a
Contortion, a Temporary knot; & ~~what~~ why do I pity & deride the
human race, when it's lot is profoundly peaceful & happy? They
have nothing to wish for. They are entirely simple & sane. We has her
big dog. They turn on the Loud Speaker. When they take a
holiday they go to the Spring of the Thames where it is as big as

a man's arm, not big enough for a boat; & they carry their boat till they can put it in, & then they skull all the way down to Marlow. Sometimes, she said the river is level with the banks; & it is perfectly peaceful. Then she said to me suddenly, as we were looking down at the wood from her window "That's where the poet Shelley wrote Islam. He tied his boat to the tree there. My grandfather had a walking stick cut from that tree." &c. You always run up against poetry in England; & I like this dumb poetry; & I wish I could be like that. She will live to be a hundred; she knows exactly what she hopes; her life seems to me incredibly happy. She is very plain; but entirely unversed, unambitious; & I believe, entirely right. Yes: that's what I've fallen in love with — being a stockbroker.

Thursday

There have been masses of parties. But I cried off, after one at Clive with Lord Berners & Raymond; a one, a very quiet one, at Nevas. I shall never dine out again. I thought, in the middle of drinking Clive's Champagne — because one always says the same things; well, that was the Champagne, perhaps. One talks about Sybil & the [NYPL] schools; Clemmie, & Eddie Marsh. Clive would parade a new affair of his: "I've been dealt a new ~~pack of cards~~ hand" he kept saying: "It takes me, I'm glad to say, into the lower walks of society." Absurd little cockatoo! However there was lots of Champagne — Kate of Salmon — I don't know what; & you never weevil — if that's to be her new name — was as excited as usual. But to write a novel in the heart of London is next to an impossibility. I felt as if I were nailing a flag to the top of a mast in a raging gale. What is so perplexing is the change of perspective: here I'm sitting thinking how to manage the passage of ten years, up in the Hebrides: then the telephone rings: then a charming young person called Lucas comes to tea: well, am I here, asking him about the life of Webster, what he's writing, or in a bedroom up in the Hebrides.[2] I know which I like best — the Hebrides.

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16th March 1926

I have been meaning every day to write something- such millions of things strike me to write to you- about & never do, & now have only seraps & Fridays & time, damn it all- We are rather rushed- Nessy under mosquito net? But dearest Vita, why not take Quinine & you are all right again! (a vain assertion: time has spun a whole circle since you had fever off the Coast of Baluchistan) much to my relief, Lady Sackville wrote & told me you had arrived: also she asks me to go & see her, to talk about you. Imbrie. "I know you are very fond of Vita"; but I haven't the courage, without what luck! I thought: then a third; incredible! I thought; then a fourth: But Vita is having a joke, I thought, profoundly I distrust you. Yet they were all genuine letters. I have dealt them out every word, four times, I daresay. They do yield more on suction; they are very curiously in that way. Is it that I am, as Lady Sackville says, very fond of you: are you, like a good writer, a very Carpel packer of words? (Oh Look here: your book of travels. May we have it? (Please say yes, for the autumn.) I like your letters I was saying, when overcome by the usual Hogarth Press Spasm. And I would write a draft if I could, of my letters; & so keep them & Compact them; & ten years ago I did write drafts, when I was in my letter writing days, but now, never. Indeed, there are the first letters of Jenica I was married. As for the not jerk, you are quite wrong- Style is a very simple matter; this all rhythm. Once you get that, you can't use the wrong words. But on the other hand here am I sitting after half the morning, crammed with ideas, & visions, & so on, & can't dislodge them, for lack of the right rhythm. Now this is very profound, what rhythm is, & goes far deeper than words. A right, an emotion, creates this wave in the mind, long before it makes words to fit it; & in writing (such is my present belief)

here writes

one has to recapture this, & let the working (which has nothing apparently to do with words) & then, as it breaks & tumbles in the mind, it makes words fit it. But no doubt I shall think differently next year. Then there is my character (you see, how Egotistic I am; for I answer only questions that are about myself) I agree about the lack of jolly vulgarity. But then think how I was brought up! No school; mooning about alone among my father's books; never any chance to suck up all that goes on in schools - throwing balls, ragging: slang; vulgarity; scenes; jealousies - only rages with my half brothers, & being walked off my legs 20 and the Serpentine by my father. But did Proust pass that way? Did you? Can you chaff a table of officers?

Do tell me scraps of the Lowndes talk: or what the woman say who has read Oscar Wilde. Then about the expeditions you make to find flowers. I must go & lunch. We have had lunch, oft roast beef & Yorkshire pudding. also a romantic pudding in which you find almonds bodied in cream. Nice bitter cold; a black wind is blowing & heaping old newspapers along the street - a mood I connect with March in London.

But I was going to talk about Ottoline; & the ghastliness of that party at Ethels. It was a blizzard, thunder & snow; & Dad it fetched me, & we had to cross London to Chelsea. Well, by the time I got there, my fur coat (I never bought a new one) was like a cabmans cape; & a hiss of fur, hanicdly attached by a safety pin, flapping. And there damned people sitting snug round their tea table, thought O Lord, why cant Virginia look more of a lady: which do infuriated me, through vanity I own, & the consciousness of being better than them, with all their pearl necklaces & orange coloured clothes. Not my back like an infuriated tom cat. As for Ottoline, she is peeling off powder like flakes on a horse; yet her skirts are above her knees: I cant describe the mingling of decrepitude & finery: & all the talk had to be brought back to her. There was Percy Lubbock. We were egged on to discuss the passions: mumbled like an old nurse that he never had such nasty things: whereupon, in the vilest taste, I contradicted him, never thinking of Lady Sybil, & he bubbled & dribbled on his hat with discomfort. &

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said, please Mr. Woolf leave me alone. ~~And~~ And I felt inclined to leave them all alone, for ever & ever, these tea parties, these Ottolenghi, these incumbering womanitical old maids (Lush Athlin was there too.) Talk of the romance, the reference & upset & devastation of Persia! Come with me & further – remoter (I doubt that this is English, though it may be the most ~~just~~ taste) to the living, concerned, contented, indifferent middle Classes of England. I've lived in Persia half my life; but never been among the stockbrokers, till this spring. Last week it was Lord Rothschild's agent – that is another brother of Leonard's – at Widdington. There again I felt in love – But Eddy says this is snobbery: a belief in some glamour which is unreal. They are, again, entirely direct, in the top of every object without a smile whether it is Gentleman or herbalism – when my sister in law ~~took~~ showed me her hunter (for huntings the passion of her life) I had the thrill in the thighs which, they say, is the sign of a work of art. Then the war do worn & the horse with living. Seven miles from a village: no servant with sleep: week end parties at the great house: Duncan Mary playing cross word puzzles after lunch, my sister in law stripping her one pair of shoes & skirt to Ribbons hunting rabbits in the bracken. But Mary: two babies: & do on. Well, I felt, nothing Ever do ask my life Eager Equals a single day of this. I like Eddy. I Eddy says he knows all about it: this my snobbery. But like the sharpness of his mine: his odd mixed qualities, & angles. The young are dangerous. They mind so much what one thinks of them. One has to be very careful what one says. That buzzing blue bottle Clive almost unrolled as in a row: but it is past: & I am dining with Clive tomorrow, to meet some mysterious admirer, for Clive thinks me so vain I must always meet admirers, & drink the usual Champagne.

Sure enough – here is Clive ringing up to ask us to lunch to meet
Sybil – yes, Sybil back: here is a note to remind you of Sybil.
Then I met Rose Macaulay & George Moore (D'ye remember
scolding me – one of your scoldings – for not meeting writers?) What I
say about writers is that they are the salt of the earth (even up to day it
must undoubtedly give rapture for the middle classes – the bankers,
the stockbrokers) With both of these people, Rose & George, one can talk the truth – a
great advantage. Never did anyone talk such nonsense as George. "Do not
tell me you admire Hardy, Mr. Woolf. My good friend tell me ~~a Hugh~~
if he has written a single sentence well? Not one. Is there a single scene in
all those novels one remembers?" Whatever I said he pooh poohed: till at last
(this was at Mary's with Jack in plum coloured velvet, like a tea cosy)
I said "Mr. Moore, when one is Mr. Moore, that is enough." And we floated up
to watercloset & Paris; & he attacked Conrad & Henry James & Anatole France; but
I can't tell you how urbane & sprightly the old hoth parrot was; &, (this is what
I think using the brain does for one) not a bucket, not a cloria, of
pomp, humbug, respectability in him: he was fresh as a daisy.
Devil, you have never sent me your photograph. Angel, you wish to
know about Spiggle: she has eczema, & a cough. Sometimes we peer into her
throat & heaved moves a tone. The publishing season trembles: not a
review of us so far. I have done up 19 parcels to China, via Siberia; which
as you know, must not weigh over 4 lbs: each; & be open ended. Also, folded a
myriad of these leaflets. Also rejected Dalglish on Pope. Also accepted Mary's
stories. And to day begun a new working book, having filled the old, –
written close on 40,000 words in 2 months – my record. Paid Nessa & Sheeta
at my house; but mostly the common sparrow, the domestic hen. Never mind.
In the intervals of being leaden with despair, I am very excited. I say, When
do you get back? When shall I stop waiting to you? All our plans about
holidays, are the same again; God knows when we shall get off: but I don't
want to be poking about in Provence when you're here.
Yes, dearest Vita: I do miss you; I think of you: I have
a million things, not so much to day, as to sink into you.
Tell me how you are. & be very careful. V W

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